

City of Westfield

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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June 23, 2008

MAYOR
J. ANDREW COOK, MAYOR

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
BRUCE A. HAUKE

Possible Annexation will bring City Services at Lower Cost

Westfield, IN - Westfield's Mayor Andy Cook announced today that the City of Westfield will begin researching the possibility of annexing several properties in Washington Township, properties which are virtually surrounded by the City of Westfield, in hopes of streamlining local government and eliminating existing inefficiencies.

City administration will introduce an annexation ordinance at the June 23rd City Council Meeting and ask that the City Council evaluate the issues related to these potential annexations. The administration plans to work with the City Council to schedule public meetings to gather public input.

The City administration feels that this is a unique opportunity for annexation because of the recent legislation (Governor Mitch Daniels' Property Tax Reform Plan – House Bill 1001) referring to the one percent tax caps affecting 2010's total property tax bill. With the passing of this legislation, there will be NO fiscal impact on annexed property owners. "Not only will annexed residents gain an increased amount of City services, but their property tax bill will also decrease," says Cook.

Cook references the Kernan/Shepard Report commissioned last year by Governor Mitch Daniels. Results from that study outline the inefficiencies resulting from overlapping governments and the City of Westfield is moving toward complying with the study results and making changes that make sense for Westfield and the community.

"The community has charged this administration with managing Westfield's growth well and eliminating duplication of duties and inefficiencies," says Mayor Cook. "In my six months in office, I have spent time researching and evaluating all aspects of our local government and I have realized that we face many challenges directly associated with redundant layers of government," says Cook.

According to the City of Westfield, there are several other positive components that will result from these annexations. Most importantly, if annexed, residents will gain additional political representation. Currently, township residents cannot vote for the Mayor, City Council or any other issues on the ballot specific to the City of Westfield. However, the City of Westfield has jurisdiction over Washington Township as it relates to services such as planning, zoning, water and sewer service and fire services. In other words, if a dispute were to arise regarding one of aforementioned services in Washington Township, residents' lack of representation would not allow for a voice in the matter. "Our history has shown that disputes over planning and zoning decisions do not only affect City residents and right now, Township residents do not have a vote," says Cook.

For additional information, please contact me at the above listed numbers.

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